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President: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) ..... (Bahrain)

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In the absence of Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/57/77-E/2002/63 and A/57/79-E/2002/76)

1. **Mr. Lubbers** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that an increasing trend in peace-building operations was for political, military, humanitarian and development actors to assume a comprehensive and integrated approach to crisis situations. The Office of UNHCR had extensive field presence in volatile regions and often worked in partnership with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, refugee security and efforts to ensure sustainable peace. For the return of refugees to countries of origin to be sustainable, sound post-conflict policies were essential. Increasingly, UNHCR worked also in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). In addition, there was a need for strengthened cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) to address staff security issues. The joint effort to ensure that the Office received funding from the regular budget must be continued.

2. Recent experience in Afghanistan had further highlighted the need to devise a more effective and innovative approach to the transition from emergency relief to longer-term development, which would incorporate humanitarian as well as development aspects. He wished to propose a variation on the demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) approach, namely repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

3. The concept of development through local integration would apply to cases where local integration of refugees in countries of first asylum was a viable option. Host Governments and the international community should perceive refugees as agents of development rather than as a burden. Since the World Bank, UNDP or UNHCR would be unable to deliver the necessary results singly, joint ventures should be organized on a country-by-country basis. UNHCR had accordingly identified eight possible flagship programmes.

4. The United Nations system in recent years had sought to strengthen its response to internal displacement through an inter-agency, collaborative approach. His own Office's policy on involvement with internally displaced persons had been communicated to its partners and endorsed by the General Assembly. By responding more predictably to concrete situations, UNHCR could help to ensure a better overall response from the United Nations. He proposed to keep the Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator informed of situations where UNHCR already played a substantial role in supporting internally displaced persons and where it would continue to be needed in future.

5. Given the importance of strong leadership on the ground, the humanitarian coordinator system required strengthening. In situations involving large humanitarian operations, a representative of a United Nations agency with a significant presence in the country should be available to act as humanitarian coordinator. UNHCR, for its part, would indicate its own availability in a timely manner.

6. He supported ongoing efforts to strengthen the consolidated appeals process, but had two concerns. Firstly, UNHCR should not be perceived as a purely humanitarian agency, since its work was not limited to short-term emergency relief programmes. Moreover, the process should contain adequate plans to unite relief and transitional programmes, including in the area of resource mobilization. Secondly, donors must step up their financial support and be more heavily involved in needs assessment and follow-up. Good planning meant little if the plans could not be implemented.

7. Lastly, he wished to stress the importance of regional approaches to humanitarian crises and complex cross-border population movements. Regional organizations and initiatives such as the new African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) played a vital role in that regard.

8. **Mr. Valdes** (Chile), supporting all the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on strengthening the coordination of emergency assistance (A/57/77-E/2002/63), said that his delegation shared the concern that donor contributions made through the consolidated appeals process tended

to be limited to food aid and that they had declined even as humanitarian crises had grown in scope and seriousness. More and more, donors preferred to channel aid bilaterally to high-profile crises in which security was a problem, making it difficult for the United Nations to form a comprehensive picture of humanitarian needs and aid flows. Equally troubling was the tendency to distinguish between relief assistance and development funding and to callously neglect the latter at a later stage when the prostrate populations most needed help. That had fortunately not been the case in Afghanistan, and the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People could well serve as the model for current and future humanitarian action.

9. Humanitarian crises and the sufferings of the people involved did not obey political considerations, and the satisfaction of humanitarian needs had to be disengaged from the political situations that had provoked the crises in areas such as Liberia, Guinea or the Middle East.

10. Natural disasters and environmental emergencies would continue to create critical economic difficulties for many of the less developed countries. The alarming spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world had to be stopped. The marked rise of internal conflicts had also produced humanitarian disasters such as internal displacement and harm to civilians. Tragically, women and children were increasingly becoming military objectives in places like Palestine, Israel, the Sudan and Angola. International mine-clearing efforts were also a necessity.

11. The Secretary-General was right to call for the creation of a culture of protection of civilian populations, for which the international community was always responsible, and a universal consensus would have to be reached on the underlying principles. The Council for its part must work to strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations to deal with a growing number of humanitarian crises.

12. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that natural disasters such as drought, desertification, earthquakes and the El Niño phenomenon had affected many populated regions, having an impact on both people and the infrastructure. In addition, many regions of the world were beset by civil strife and regional wars that caused particular suffering to marginal population groups and to the most vulnerable sectors of society such as women, children, the disabled, the elderly, widows and orphans. His delegation agreed with the statement in the Secretary-General's report to the effect that terrorism had recently assumed an alarming regional and worldwide dimension. The process of social development had therefore taken on a human dimension, the provision of relief assistance would have no lasting impact unless it included a social component and met the needs of people for capacity-building and institution-building, thereby ensuring the effective participation of people in policy-making and the distribution of resources.

13. The alleviation of the burden of natural disasters, and preparations to deal with them should be a worldwide objective. The destructiveness of natural disasters could to a considerable extent be alleviated, even in cases where the disasters themselves were on a scale that could not be managed and where they could not be predicted. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, such as regional wars or terrorism mainly affected the poor, the most vulnerable and the marginalized. There was therefore a connection between the occurrence of disasters and the increase in abject poverty. It was difficult to speak of disasters in isolation from the political context. Social development was, first and foremost, a political process.

14. It was now understood that a decisive factor in development was mankind and that true development was based on human development. That concept had become widely accepted after its adoption by the UNDP and, in turn, by the developing countries and their regional organizations.

15. Recognition that man was central to development, had encouraged sound views of development, including a focus on social organization and the ability of social institutions to maximize the benefits of social action and ensure that those benefits were distributed fairly. Experience of development in the countries of the third world, in particular, had shown that concentration on certain aspects, sectors or groups to the neglect of others was likely to lead to distorted development that did not meet the material and spiritual needs of the population.

16. Although present-day societies had certain features in common, they were highly diverse in terms of their economy and natural resources, their forms of social and economic organization, and their lifestyles, and standard of living. A positive view should be taken

of social diversity, especially in its cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious dimensions, so as to respond to the interests of the diverse groups within the framework of the basic values shared by the society. Social integration had to be based on the best interests of everyone, but particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Poverty and unemployment were major obstacles to social integration. It was therefore necessary to adopt an overall view of the issues addressed at the Millennium Summit and, before that, at the World Summit for Social Development.

17. In addressing the problems of poverty and unemployment, society had to pay particular attention to deprived and marginalized groups. Failure to do so would be likely to lead to social division, a withdrawal of certain groups from society and to hostility and violence. That was the responsibility both of the State and of the international community, which must fulfil its responsibility to give particular assistance to the least developed countries and thereby make a reality of the right to development. The developed countries should also make a serious effort to increase their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

18. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that humanitarian assistance had become even more important in view of the frequent occurrence of natural disasters and armed conflict, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the growing problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. Natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies were increasingly regional in nature, hence the importance of enhancing regional response mechanisms and building national capacity. Humanitarian assistance — aimed primarily at protecting vulnerable groups and enhancing their ability to withstand crises — should be provided in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991. In particular, humanitarian assistance activities should conform to the wishes of the requesting countries and should be provided without conditionality.

19. While the consolidated appeals process had played an important role in raising funds for humanitarian assistance, it was a matter of concern that the proportion of such funding had fallen from an average of 40 per cent to 30 per cent over the past decade.

20. The response of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to the floods in China had been much appreciated.

21. **Mr. Caldas de Moura** (Brazil) said that his delegation attached great importance to the collaboration of various United Nations bodies, leading to synergy in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The steady decline in the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through the consolidated appeals process was a matter of particular concern, since it had led to a weakening of coordination and lack of adequate support for "forgotten emergencies". Money was poured into visible emergencies that mobilized public opinion in developed countries, but resources were less forthcoming when it came to laying the foundations for future recovery and development. To ensure that root causes were dealt with, donor countries must consider how to bridge the artificial separation between relief, rehabilitation and development that currently hampered transition activities.

22. International assistance could make a real difference by reducing the need for post-disaster aid, reconstruction and peace-building. A true culture of protection depended on safe and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel to those in need and a resolution of the problem of internally displaced persons. States must comply with their international obligations in that regard. It was also vital to strengthen the advocacy efforts of the United Nations system and to halt abuses and ensure that the perpetrators were held accountable.

23. Since humanitarian workers and civilians were increasingly the targets of deliberate or random violence in armed conflicts, their safety and security must continue to be accorded high priority. The protection of internally displaced persons must be strengthened including by promoting use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Council, for its part, should adopt a victim-centred approach to humanitarian emergencies, keeping in mind that aid recipients also had rights.

24. **Mr. Frisch** (Observer for Switzerland) said that OCHA should strengthen its efforts to raise awareness of humanitarian situations both within the Organization and among Member States. His delegation attached particular attention to efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance and to improve its effectiveness.

25. The consolidated appeals process should be used to improve prioritization of humanitarian need and to promote increased dialogue among donors. It was also vital to plan humanitarian operations in close consultation with host Governments. In view of the need to ensure the transition between relief and development, closer linkages should be created between the consolidated appeals process, strategic intervention frameworks and national poverty reduction strategy papers.

26. While paying tribute to humanitarian personnel working in precarious situations, his delegation also wished to stress the need for them to adhere to relevant codes of behaviour.

27. Conflict situations were often exacerbated by the displacement of populations, which also had a destabilizing impact on host populations. He emphasized the importance of applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in such situations. Switzerland was involved in efforts to promote respect for international humanitarian law in conflicts, including by non-State actors. Such respect was essential to establishing a "culture of protection", responding to the specific needs of vulnerable groups, ensuring the security of humanitarian personnel and prohibiting unlawful exploitation of natural resources.

28. **Mr. Zaman** (Observer for Bangladesh) noted that over the years, the extent and type of humanitarian assistance had adapted to crises that had led to an increased need for national and global coordination. In addition, a smooth transition from ad hoc relief efforts — to which the United Nations machinery was primarily geared — to long-term planning for reconstruction and sustainable development. Moreover, the decline in funding must be reversed. The consolidated appeals process, while a useful fund-raising tool, would not of itself compensate for the 62-per-cent shortfall in disaster-prone areas such as West Africa, the Great Lakes region, Angola or Palestine.

29. The groups most vulnerable in humanitarian crises — women, children, the internally displaced — had to be protected and assisted. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee had issued a welcome policy statement on the mainstreaming and integration of gender perspectives into the humanitarian response to emergencies. The United Nations system and the World Bank must support targeted interventions providing relief to women and the other vulnerable groups, and the services of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector must be enlisted, especially in connection with poverty-alleviation schemes. Innocent civilians were often the major victims of armed conflicts, and the steps taken to promote greater coordination between OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide more protection for them.

30. In the case of natural disasters, regional and national centres for early forecasting, equipped with advanced technologies, had to be introduced and developed. Monitoring of the situation on the ground, through United Nations field trips and closer consultation with Governments in the assessment of needs, was also of paramount importance.

31. **Ms. Larusdottir** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that for too many, it had become a daily challenge to remain alive despite drought, floods, and war. Food alone would not ensure survival in such situations, for the vulnerability and risk factors were more complex. People died of preventable causes like measles, malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis or childbirth complications. Complex emergencies were responsible for 65 per cent of all epidemics and engendered the highest risk for HIV/AIDS, preventable child and maternal mortality, disability and disease.

32. Emergencies made it imperative to take exceptional public health action to ensure continued delivery of services and protection of the population. Indeed, emergency and humanitarian actions were an essential part of WHO global activity. Yet health remained underfunded and, in fact, was often the lowest priority of the United Nations consolidated appeals mechanism. Critical public health measures were essential to save lives, and human survival was the ultimate measure of the success or failure of humanitarian operations. WHO identified the life-saving practices, adjusted them to the epidemiological and operational context, and ensured that they were applied in a coordinated manner by all humanitarian partners.

33. **Mr. Graisse** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that in responding to crises effective coordination between the various humanitarian organizations was both an operational necessity and a moral imperative. WFP mobilized food aid in emergencies and protracted crises, and in 2001 it had assisted 77 million people in 82 countries at a cost of almost $2 billion. Its

experience on the front line of humanitarian action, in often extremely complex and rapidly unfolding situations as in Afghanistan or more recently in southern Africa, had made brought home to it the benefits of enhanced coordination. Under the guidance of the OCHA, the United Nations system had in the past decade made much progress on that score.

34. WFP had worked hard to integrate the consolidated appeals process into its normal work. Coordination mechanisms should, of course, be continually reviewed and improved. Currently, it might be advisable to encourage the involvement of a wider range of humanitarian stakeholders or to analyse the impact of underfunding. Improved coordination among donor countries to ensure rational allocation of resources among equally vulnerable populations was essential.

35. WFP was supporting innovations such as the United Nations joint logistics centres recently established in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, which sought to coordinate the management of the logistical assets and transport infrastructure of all humanitarian agencies in order to speed up response times and lower costs. WFP had also been particularly active at the inter-agency level in strengthening emergency-preparedness. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), it had directed the preparation of a set of guidelines for inter-agency contingency planning and promoted system-wide contingency planning. A WFP unit, using information technologies, conducted food security analyses and mapped critical pockets of hunger and vulnerability and, in conjunction with the early-warning systems of other agencies and organizations, the unit provided valuable early information on potential crises to the entire humanitarian community.

36. Enhanced preparedness measures, however, were meaningless without the accompanying resources for action. Often donor funds arrived too late to avert crises or were earmarked for much-publicized emergencies. Support had to be timely, balanced and sustained. Besides being far more economical, early action was a moral imperative.

37. **Mr. Ouedraogo** (Burkina Faso) said that natural disasters were affecting increasing numbers of people, while continuing armed conflicts in many countries were displacing whole civilian populations, which were made more vulnerable by the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS. The result was an unprecedented number of emergency humanitarian situations that were straining the economic capabilities of States. In poor countries, national development and living conditions were being compromised. Drought and war also often spilled over national borders, bringing with them flows of hungry refugees.

38. International solidarity demanded that funds should be found to assist and protect the victims, especially in target groups such as displaced persons, women, children, the elderly and the disabled. The United Nations system must increase its presence in the many parts of the world that were prey to humanitarian crises. It must help the Governments concerned to develop effective national institutional capabilities and also encourage the involvement of local communities.

39. In Burkina Faso, the Government had established a network of national, regional and local centres for emergency assistance and rehabilitation throughout the country. Several years of failing crops had made emergency food aid necessary, in cooperation with the Government's development partners. In addition, a number of non-governmental organizations were providing targeted assistance to the handicapped, refugees and returnees. Burkina Faso had emphasized disaster prevention through early-warning and preparedness programmes. The rehabilitation sector, however, despite its importance, rarely attracted donor support.

40. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's recommendations and called for a genuinely humanitarian consolidated appeals process, free of political or strategic considerations.

41. **Mr. MacDonnell** (Observer for Canada) said that his delegation supported in general the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/63) regarding humanitarian assistance. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had galvanized the international community into acting to remedy the humanitarian and political crisis in Afghanistan. That momentum must be maintained, and at the same time problems such as protection for civilians, humanitarian access and definition of the roles and relations between military and humanitarian actors must be addressed.

42. Complex emergencies and natural disasters everywhere presented similar challenges and affected

millions of people. Access to those in need was one of the most frustrating challenges and it was unacceptable that humanitarian actors should be prevented from reaching the vulnerable, often as a result of the policies and actions of the local authorities. He stressed that sovereignty implied responsibility for civilian populations and that international law provided for access for humanitarian assistance and the safe and unhindered movement of humanitarian personnel. Where Governments did not have the means to meet their responsibilities, they should seek the support of the international community, which could play a valuable role in helping to organize humanitarian aid, and which, moreover, had a responsibility to take action against impunity for attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers.

43. Action in support of war-affected and other vulnerable populations had made important progress in the past three years. The issue of humanitarian access was a key element of such efforts and was buttressed by the Secretary-General's call for a culture of protection. His Government had made the protection of civilians a foreign policy priority and he urged other States to do likewise. Recent events in West Africa had demonstrated that there were varying degrees of vulnerability and capacities to act, and that extra effort must be made to provide all populations with appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance. The recent actions taken in that regard by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee were welcome but must be integrated into operations worldwide.

44. It had in the past proved difficult to ensure effective transition from relief to reconciliation and development, in part due to a lack of political will on the part of States. Much work remained to be done to create flexible funding and institutional mechanisms to support transition periods and address root causes. That had become clear in certain consolidated appeals processes, where country teams had included transition activities only to find them undersubscribed. His Government had attempted to address such concerns through its Peace-Building Fund, Landmines Initiative and Human Security Programme and was exploring other ways to respond to the needs of countries in transition, with a view to improving links between humanitarian aid and development programmes. At the international level, some frank discussion in the governing bodies was required, and donors must deliver consistent messages to the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other development financing organizations. In any event, donors should not exert pressure on humanitarian actors to become engaged in transition activities in the absence of development actors and should help to clarify roles and responsibilities at the field level.

45. Agency partners must be required to add value to their efforts by entering into memoranda of understanding and other inter-agency cooperative arrangements to ensure tasks were distributed appropriately, with built-in exit strategies. Existing planning instruments such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the consolidated appeals processes and the World Bank's common development frameworks could be used to provide greater coherence. At times it might also be worthwhile to look at programming from a regional or subregional perspective. Resident and humanitarian coordinators and special representatives of the Secretary-General were well placed to foster such collaboration and the Department of Political Affairs and OCHA should likewise strengthen linkages and cooperation. New tools, such as common frameworks and programming, could also be explored.

46. Transitions which led to sustainable peace and development relied heavily on grass-roots involvement, and resident coordinators and relevant agencies and regional organizations should identify, make use of and enhance local capacities throughout the crisis and subsequently. It was also important to ensure the active participation of women. Transition between relief and development was not a linear, orderly process, and it was therefore critical to ensure proper timing of interventions and adopt a flexible and holistic approach. In conflict settings, opportunities to promote reconciliation and conflict prevention should be seized whenever possible, even in the midst of an ongoing crisis. An effective transition also required a secure environment, as had been proved in Sierra Leone, East Timor and Afghanistan, and security and security sector reform must likewise be addressed as an integral part of the reconstruction process.

47. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru) said the fact that preventive action was less costly than humanitarian action in the case of natural disasters was a further incentive to develop adequate early warning systems and disaster prevention and preparedness. The Council and the General Assembly should make preventive efforts a priority by addressing the root causes of conflicts, which were almost always associated with extreme

poverty, social exclusion and weak democracy, and by helping to create the conditions necessary to ensure reconstruction and development as was being done in Afghanistan. In order to support such efforts, the United Nations should have only one coordinating body responsible for its relations with affected communities and populations.

48. The protection of civilian populations, displaced persons and refugees must be of central concern in the context of the proposed culture of protection, which would require respect for human rights, in particular on the part of Governments and the parties involved in conflict situations. It was also important to ensure protection for humanitarian personnel by developing codes of conduct and standards.

49. In closing, he expressed support for the efforts of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and the measures intended to facilitate its activities in the field.

50. **Mr. Son** Se-joo (Republic of Korea) said that, since the increasing frequency of natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies coupled with the decreasing capacity of developing countries to absorb the economic shock of such events was a trend which was likely to continue, it was important to bolster resources and enhance coordination. Furthermore, since natural disasters and conflicts increasingly affected more than one State, a regional approach to humanitarian aid was often necessary. He therefore welcomed the initiative to strengthen regional infrastructures and enhance cooperation between national emergency-preparedness activities and supported efforts by OCHA to strengthen its regional presence and develop local capacities. Improved contingency planning and preparedness among the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the United Nations country teams would likewise contribute to more effective utilization of limited resources. In that context, establishment of the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre and the humanitarian information centres was welcome.

51. There was growing concern at the increasing number of civilians being targeted in conflict situations and support for the Secretary-General's call to promote a culture of protection. All groups in conflict situations should respect the provisions of international humanitarian and human rights instruments and ensure safe and sustained access by humanitarian workers to civilian populations. The primary responsibility for ensuring access lay with the State concerned.

52. A smooth transition from emergency relief to humanitarian development was crucial for the creation of a framework capable of sustaining a nation, and he therefore welcomed efforts to increase the participation of the local community as primary actors in that transition. Support for the vulnerable, such as internally displaced persons, women, children, the elderly and the disabled, was likewise essential. The private sector was a virtually untapped resource, which, through investment and job creation, could help sustain a nation through the transition period.

53. He recognized the usefulness of the consolidated appeals process, but stressed the need for a global system to track humanitarian funding. Continued capacity-building and increased coordination would help to decrease the impact of humanitarian crises significantly, a goal to which his delegation remained committed.

54. **Mr. Blanco Domínguez** (Observer for the Dominican Republic), having associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Dominican Republic was especially vulnerable to the cyclical natural phenomena which periodically wreaked havoc in the Caribbean region. Despite his Government's efforts to establish policies for disaster prevention and mitigation, as a result of social and economic pressures many people were forced to live in geographically vulnerable areas and inadequate housing. That situation, which was not exclusive to his country, explained why natural disasters caused increasing loss of life, and it had economic, social and environmental consequences which delayed development and undermined progress.

55. It was essential that the fruits of technical and scientific knowledge, including remote sensing data, should be made available to the developing countries and national and international humanitarian organizations to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. It was also essential that the bureaucratic obstacles which in too many cases delayed the provision of humanitarian assistance should be eliminated. In that context, he drew attention to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 56/195, which requested the Secretary-General to optimize and disseminate through all available channels information

necessary for the effective management of international cooperation in the field of disaster reduction.

56. Natural disasters were a complex phenomenon which recognized no boundaries, but adequate preparation, warning and mitigation strategies could make all the difference. Regional and international cooperation commitments including by financing organizations, national Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, were the key to an effective international response. Accordingly, he called on the international community, in particular the donor countries to provide through established channels the necessary additional untied funding which would make possible the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and the promotion of development in general.

57. **Ms. Singh** (India), having associated herself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her Government, despite resource constraints and in a true spirit of South-South cooperation, continued to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.

58. She expressed support for the promotion of a culture of protection, which should be defined in a broad and realistic manner. A durable and just peace provided the foundation for protection but its establishment could be impeded by poverty. International cooperation for development would help to ensure social progress, raise living standards and create a culture of protection.

59. Democracy, the rule of law, good governance, human rights, economic growth and development were mutually reinforcing and constituted necessary elements for the creation of a culture of protection. The roots of human rights violations varied and were not always amenable to legislative and enforcement approaches. For example, situations involving extreme ideologies required a more multifaceted approach, whereas human rights problems which were in fact symptoms of underdevelopment could only be addressed by sustained economic growth and development.

60. She welcomed the independent review of the consolidated appeals process and noted that the process had been strengthened over the years and that its technical standards and level of engagement with United Nations agencies had been reinforced. Unfortunately, despite increased needs, the proportion of humanitarian assistance channelled through the consolidated appeals process was shrinking. Without a significant increase in humanitarian funding, the transition from relief to development could drain resources from traditional budgets. She supported the position of the Secretary-General that transitional activities should be financed through the consolidated appeals process.

61. With regard to the illicit trade in natural resources and its effect on humanitarian assistance, she maintained that a mandatory system for marking and tracing small arms and light weapons would save more innocent lives than elaborate controls on trade in minerals and natural resources. Most conflicts were fought with small arms and light weapons, which were so lethal and easy to obtain that they had made terrorists and warlords increasingly powerful.

62. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were not legal principles negotiated in an intergovernmental process; they had simply been drafted by a team of technical experts and non-governmental organizations. On the other hand, the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance outlined in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 were valid and proven principles, and their continued application would contribute greatly to relieving pain and suffering.

63. **Mr. Lamba** (Observer for Malawi) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The report on the strengthening of coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance provided a good basis for a meaningful exchange of views.

64. Malawi and the southern Africa region were facing a serious food shortage, and therefore, his delegation hoped that the related resolution would be focused, forward-looking and address the challenges that the countries of the region were encountering as they responded to that crisis. His Government had declared a national disaster because of the food crisis, against the backdrop of one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection. As an interim measure, the Government had imported maize, but delivery had been slow.

65. For the Government of Malawi, the guiding principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182 were the basis for action in such crises. However, the question of capacity must be addressed

urgently if the transition from relief to development was to be realized, and technical as well as financial support was needed. Humanitarian workers were faced with serious logistical challenges in delivering food quickly to places with little or no infrastructure. Reaching the most vulnerable groups — the elderly, women, children and the disabled — required specific strategies.

66. His delegation would like to see continued improvement of the consolidated appeals process, with more involvement by non-governmental organizations. Innovative strategies were needed to reverse the decline in humanitarian assistance channelled through that process. His delegation also commended efforts to develop an international disaster response law. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had made commendable efforts in mobilizing resources, and should have an increased presence at the regional level.

67. **Mr. Acemah** (Uganda) said that the distribution of risk and vulnerability was uneven throughout the world, and Africa often bore the brunt of disasters. Decentralization of disaster response would help to strengthen the capacity of local populations to respond to emergencies, one of the major goals of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Government of Uganda had implemented a decentralization programme, whereby local councils had been given power to organize their communities. The Vulnerability and Analysis Mapping Unit of the World Food Programme had completed a pilot emergency vulnerability analysis, proof that community-based local disaster management was crucial.

68. Information regarding impending disasters should be accessible to all stakeholders. It had become clear that information management was critical in disasters, as institutional memory and access mechanisms could be destroyed, and Governments and the United Nations must build effective systems to store information for future use.

69. The number of vulnerable societies was increasing as human activity interfered with the balance of nature. It was unlikely that the Millennium development goals could be achieved within the desired time frame unless disaster reduction was factored into the process. Most developing countries had limited budget capacity to set up disaster management mechanisms, and thus, they relied increasingly on the United Nations and the donor community to provide critical input. The consolidated appeals process, therefore, should be strengthened and funded adequately to enable humanitarian assistance to be channelled through it. Bilateral assistance, though welcome, should be aimed mainly at the most vulnerable.

70. **Mr. Coşkun** (Observer for Turkey) said that natural disasters and complex emergencies continued to affect millions of people worldwide, and the conditions under which humanitarian assistance was often delivered had deteriorated. The members of the international community must join forces to tackle those challenges. Natural disasters and the tragic events of 11 September, which disregarded national borders, made it clear that, in an interconnected world, there was no alternative to that approach.

71. The international community had had at its disposal for over 10 years the mechanism established in General Assembly resolution 46/182, which gave the United Nations a central role in coordinating international humanitarian assistance. Its guiding principles had helped to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian response, yet given the increasingly complex operating environment, there was room for improvement.

72. Because of its location in a region prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters, Turkey had suffered immense human and material loss, but there had been positive outcomes as well. Recognizing their shared vulnerability and the virtue in pooling their efforts, Turkey and Greece had established the Joint Hellenic-Turkish Standby Disaster Response Unit, which was intended to provide timely and effective humanitarian assistance and reinforce United Nations standby capacity. Among the lessons learned from the 1999 earthquakes in the region was the importance of strengthening international urban search and rescue assistance, and Turkey would submit a draft resolution on that subject at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

73. Afghanistan had presented itself as a testing ground for the ability of the international community to make a difference for those in need. It was a prime example of a combined natural disaster and complex emergency. The rapid mobilization of international support had been phenomenal, but the resolve and

commitment must be maintained. The major focus in such cases should be on the transition from relief to development, which required effective and sustainable funding mechanisms.

74. The report of the Secretary-General made a valuable contribution to the goal of promoting a "culture of protection", and an indispensable part of that culture was the safety and security of humanitarian staff, which continued to be a cause for concern. Modernization and development had yielded benefits to the international community, but challenges and risks had simply become more complex. It could not be assumed that humanitarian needs would decline in coming years, and therefore, the international community must come up with coherent and comprehensive strategies in dealing with natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies. Effective international cooperation was the most valuable tool in that regard.

75. **Mr. Cappagli** (Argentina) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The United Nations system should continue to take a flexible approach in devising mechanisms to address the changing nature of humanitarian crises. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the inter-agency Unit on Internal Displacement. Bearing in mind the humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions of many armed conflicts, steps should be taken to enhance cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, within their respective mandates.

76. The needs of human beings, in particular the most vulnerable groups, should be at the centre of humanitarian action. His delegation supported the development of a culture of protection, integrating such aspects as access, justice and reconciliation, the needs of refugees and the internally displaced, safety of United Nations personnel, illicit exploitation of natural resources, small arms trafficking, landmines and the humanitarian impact of sanctions into the discussion. At the same time, the challenge posed by the criminalization of the economy in countries affected by armed conflict should be considered from the perspective of the transition from relief to development.

77. In order to mobilize additional resources to provide assistance and protection to people in need, the consolidated appeals process must be strengthened and used as a tool for coordination and strategic planning. The systematic participation of non-governmental organizations in humanitarian strategy should be encouraged. The active participation of civil society was essential to the success of humanitarian relief missions as well.

78. Although it was a well-established principle that the primary responsibility for assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises lay with Governments, in circumstances where States were unwilling or unable to meet their responsibilities the international community should step into the breach.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.